527 the «ruta» is a famous herb, one ancient record refers to Anyhow
782 it in connection with frankincense; according to another
[824] it sharpens the eye-sight, according to a third snakes hate its smell, — just as the devils hate that of frankincense. Once upon a time human beings were sacrificed, but later on only the symbol of virginal purity was offered up to the summer sun, just as on the Hungarian Ducking Monday girls were once really thrown into the water, whereas later on they were merely made soaking wet at the well. Later still, one bucket of water was enough, while to-day merely a few drops of scent represent the once drastic custom of Ducking Monday... Thus both a custom and a ceremony, which in olden times were serious and solemn, have become senseless games.

527 But let us continue with the thread of the song. Now comes the catharsis, the purifying part of the ceremony, when the young couples jump over the square fire, which flames to the four points of the compass. According to the test imposed by the song, they jump in couples and the magic song continues:

The «ruta» tree is tall
And it has many branches,
It has even leant over
The great sea.

One of its branches
Leant over the yard of (Paul Nagy)
Onto (Stephen Nagy)
Whose hair is silky but mouse coloured.

Its other branch leant
Over the yard of (Paul Kiss)
Onto (Anne Kiss)
Whose hair is silky but mouse coloured.
(Anne Kiss, Anne Kiss)
With the mouse coloured silken hair
Wears a crown of pearls on her hair.

527 It is obvious that certain teachings of the new church were mingled with this part, and that is the reason why it is so unintelligible. Only one thing is certain: the whole atmosphere calms down. The rest is sung only by the choir of the lovers:

Bend, my love, bend
The twigs of the cherry tree,
That I may pluck the best,
The sweetest for my lover,
The roundest for myself.
When the nut gets ripe,
Its leaves fall off,
Nuts, walnuts crack
Under the dry leaves!

• [824] These lines symbolise the last event of the feast of mating. The cherry is the symbol of the ripeness of love, and the nut is the symbol of mating not only here but in Hungarian folk-lore in general. The plum has a similar meaning. Instead of going into a full explanation of this verse, it is quite sufficient to quote a few popular songs:

The cracking cherries are ripening,
Luck is turning to the girls,
The cherry is ripening, its leaves are turning yellow,
One little girl is heartbroken because she has no lover!

Spurs are clinking and clanking,
Nuts are asked from the bride,
The bride shall give them to him:
They shall not clink, they shall not clank so much.

By every single window
A couple of nut trees are standing,
Only before my window
There stands a solitary tree.